

The Sable Lorch

—BY—
HERNIE HAZELTINE

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For just a moment she sat in silence, her narrowed gaze on the glowing embers in the fireplace. Then she turned to me again.

"Do you think, Philip, it was because he had something to hide?" she asked, seriously. "Something he was ashamed of and feared might become known?"

Instantly I sprang to my friend's defense.

"No," I assured her, with emphasis. "No, Evelyn. Whatever his motive was, I am satisfied it had no dishonorable basis. If he told me a deliberate falsehood it was not to spare himself. Possibly—yes, probably, it was to shield others."

I was perfectly sincere in this, but even had I believed otherwise I should have been tempted to prevarication could I have foreseen my reward. Before I quite realized her purpose Evelyn was out of her chair, had slipped over behind me, and encircling my neck with her arms, had pressed her lips softly to my cheek.

"Oh, how glad I am to hear you say that! You believe in his honesty—in his nobility, just as I do, don't you, Philip, dear?"

"I'm sure he could never have been guilty of anything dishonorable," I declared again, imprisoning her hands. But the next moment, hearing steps again crossing the hall, I reluctantly released them.

For a third time Louis stood in the doorway. Now he upheld a small red-bound book, and his face was beaming.

"Voilà, mademoiselle!" he exclaimed, delightedly. "Je viens de trouver ce livre."

It was a book of addresses, and the valet, nervously turning the pages, put his finger upon the name of Horatio Addison, M. D., with the air of one who had discovered buried treasure. I am inclined to think that we were ourselves almost as demonstratively elated as he, for though we could not be sure that this was Cameron's correspondent, the odds certainly favored that conclusion; and unless the physician had died or moved away since the entry was made, we were now in possession of his address, which chanced to be an apartment house on Madison avenue, that I knew to be given over entirely to doctors' offices.

This time Evelyn assured Louis that he was not merely a "good boy" but an incomparable assistant, and the richness of the reward came high to totally wrecking his composure, for, as he started to back from the room, I detected unmistakable tears glistening on his lashes.

"Louis," I checked him, with sudden inspiration, "apportez-vous le directeur téléphonique, s'il vous plaît."

And when the book was brought the fact that Dr. Addison's address had not been changed was promptly established. I was for calling him up, then and there, but Evelyn pointed to the clock and advised patience. It was already after midnight.

"Tomorrow," she said, in her wise fashion, "you shall call on him, and learn, if possible, how Uncle Robert replied to that letter. There is a difference, you know, Philip, between being in a place and having some one see you there. No one's eyes are infallible."

CHAPTER XIII.

When Damon Doubted Pythias.

Not until I had been passed into an elevator by a dainty young woman in the white habit of a trained nurse, shot up four floors into the hands of another who might have been the first's twin sister, and ushered by her, in turn, into a severely professional-looking waiting room, did it occur to me that I was upon an errand involving the employment of an extraordinary degree of tact. So imbued had I been with the importance of learning whether Cameron had or had not been in Peking in 1903, that up to this moment I had quite lost

sight of my own position. Now I asked myself, on what ground was I to make my plea for information? To tell this Dr. Addison the whole story would certainly be inexpedient. To hint even at alarm concerning Cameron might involve the precipitation of that financial disaster he had feared and regarding which he had warned me. Indeed, would not any effort to obtain the facts I desired be likely to arouse suspicion, no matter how delicately made?

The more I pondered the situation, sitting there thoughtfully while one after another the patients who had preceded me passed into the physician's consultation room, the more beggarly, it seemed to me, became my chances of success. And when, at length, my turn came to enter the presence of my friend's friend, I was about persuaded that I should very soon be making an ignominious exit, branded as an impertinently meddling busybody.

I have always contended that it was Dr. Addison's severely professional air which was responsible for my inspiration, for no thought of such a course occurred to me, until standing dumbly hesitant before him, I became conscious that he was making mental inventory of me with a view to a diagnosis.

The penetration of his gaze impressed me at once. His steel gray eyes were like a pair of converging probes; and they were his dominant feature. Aside from them his face was commonplace.

"Doctor," I said, and the sound of my voice was a relief to the strained tension of the moment, "I learned of you through Mr. Cameron—Mr. Robert Cameron, a mutual friend."

I hoped to see his expression brighten at the name, but it did not. If there was any change whatever it was in the reverse direction. After a second's deliberation he asked:

"You wish to consult me regarding yourself?"

On a sudden impulse I answered, "Yes," though I had neither ache nor pain, and so far as I could judge, was perfectly normal.

"I see," he replied. "Am I right in assuming that your trouble is of a nervous character?"

Heaven knows that in spite of my fancied normality there had been sufficient reason in the past few weeks for my nerves to go awry. I confessed that I had been under considerable mental strain.

Thereupon, having bade me be seated, he began to ply me with questions with a view to sympathetic revelation. I fear, however, that I gave him meager material upon which to base a conclusion. I slept well, my appetite was excellent. I had observed neither a numbness nor a supersensitiveness in my finger tips, nor a sensation of fullness at the base of the brain. I could not recall any twitching of my muscles, nor any diminution of muscular power. At length, after a brief pause, he inquired:

"Will you be good enough to tell me, Mr. Clyde, why you think you require professional attention?"

And my inability to answer him, offhand, paradoxical as it may seem, eventually supplied me with an answer at once truthful and convincing.

"Because," I explained gravely, "I find that of late I am losing my power of mental co-ordination."

The ardor with which he seized upon this index of my supposed malady was amusing. Instantly he grew obviously and deeply interested. I have since learned that what is known as confusional insanity, a rare condition, usually has its inception in this wise, "without essential emotional disturbance," if I may quote an authority. At the time, I believe he was suspicious of a developing paresis. What he thought, however, or what he did not, is aside from the story. I know only that his manner changed abruptly, his object evidently being to gain my full confidence. Whereupon, the bars of reserve lowered between us, I ventured to revert to our so-called "mutual friend."

"This isn't anything like beri-beri, is it, doctor?" I began. My ideas of the disease I mentioned were of the haziest character. I knew, however, that it was common in the Orient, and thither I would lead him.

"Oh, no, Mr. Clyde," he answered, suavely enough, now. "Beri-beri is merely the eastern name for multiple neuritis. You haven't a neuritis or you would know it. I saw a great deal of beri-beri in China and on the Malay Peninsula."

"Do I remember to have heard Cameron say he contracted it in the east?" I asked, plunging for a connection.

"I don't recall that Cameron ever had it," was his response. And then his brow grew thoughtful. "Are you sure he told you that he had; and that he was attacked while in—Asia?" I noted his hesitation over fixing the place, and wondered. At all events I had arrested his interest. Purposely I adopted a tone of uncertainty.

"N-no. I can't say definitely. But I had an impression that—" And there I paused. When I continued it was with the direct question: "Do you happen to know, doctor, whether Cameron was ever in Peking? It seems to me it was—"

"I do know that he was in Peking," he interrupted, almost savagely. "He was in Peking, in September, 1903. To be exact, he was there on the fourteenth day of that month. I have reason to know it—a particular reason to know it."

After all, how easily the information I craved had come to me! And yet I would have been glad to hear the contrary; for Cameron had assured me, in all solemnity, that he had never been in China, and it jarred upon my conception of the man's character to discover that he had tried to deceive me. I could only conclude that his

purpose was praiseworthy. But Dr. Addison had not finished.

"Tell me!" he was demanding, eagerly. "Tell me! I have excuse for asking. Has he ever admitted to you that he was there?"

"Now I come to think of it," I returned, "he hasn't. But I had the information from some one, I am pretty sure."

With an effort the physician commanded himself. When he spoke again he was comparatively composed.

"Mr. Clyde," he said apologetically, "I am not given to discussing personal matters with my patients, but the fact that you and Cameron are friends, and the fact that this subject has come up, make it almost imperative, I suppose, that I should explain briefly the feeling I have just exhibited."

Five years ago Rob Cameron and I were about as near counterparts of Damon and Pythias as ever existed. While Cameron was in Europe, I had an opportunity to go around the world

with a patient. We dawdled a good deal, and, you understand how uncertain correspondence is under those circumstances. I never knew just where I should be at any given time. Consequently, a number of letters were missed by both of us. I was still thinking of Cameron as in England or on the European continent, when lo and behold, I saw him one morning, hurrying along the principal street of the inner city of Peking. I don't know whether you have ever been there or not, but if you have, you know what that thoroughfare is. It was all bustle and activity that day, and about as crowded as Broadway at the noon hour, but with much more picturesque and contrasting currents of individuals and vehicles. I was in a carriage, myself, and Cameron was afoot, walking in the opposite direction. As we passed each other, he did not seem to see me, though I called to him loudly. This, however, did not surprise me, for there was an ungodly racket in progress. Instantly, I had the carriage turned about, but before I could overtake him, he was lost in the crowd. I was leaving Peking that afternoon, and so had no chance to look him up. I wrote him afterwards and told him of the incident, and how I regretted having to go away without exchanging at least a word with him. To my amazement he not only denied having been in Peking, but in the Chinese empire at all. When we met in London, the following spring, and I recalled the matter, asking why he had refused to admit what I knew to be the truth, he became icily indignant; and that was the beginning of the end. If I had conceded the possibility of mistake on my part, all might have been well, I suppose; but there was no such possibility. I had known Cameron for twenty-odd years, and I could not have made an error. I had seen him distinctly, clearly, at midday in the open. It was he beyond all peradventure, and from that time to this I have been unable to conceive why he lied to me, and why he chose to end our friendship rather than admit what was indubitable fact.

His explanation finished, he reached for a pen, and, as he dipped it in the ink, he added:

"I trust you will pardon me, Mr. Clyde. I have detained you."

"You have interested me," I assured him. "And that more than I can tell you." Which was quite true; yet I was even more perplexed than interested. To the maze of circumstances there was now added another baffling feature.

Dr. Addison handed me the prescription he had written.

"After meals, and at bedtime," he directed, with a return to his professional manner. "If you do not find yourself much better at the end of a week, come in again."

On the sidewalk I tore the little square of paper into bits which the wind carried in a tiny flurry across Madison avenue.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Dark of Doyers Street.

At one o'clock that day, Evelyn Grayson joined me at luncheon at Sherry's. She had been in no mood to wait any longer than was absolutely necessary for tidings of my visit to Dr. Addison; and, moreover, she had news of her own which she was anxious to convey to me.

I have often wondered why it is that the told-you-so passion is inherent in all women. There are those who manage to control it with admirable success under average circumstances, but sooner or later, even the most courageous battlers against this maternal heritage succumb, and indulge in a sort of disguised orgy of reproach.

Evelyn might have told me, for instance, that Captain MacLeod, after careful investigation, had been unable to discover either hair or hide of Peter Johnson in Gloucester or elsewhere, and stopped there. That is what a man would have done. But, altogether admirable though she was, the eternal feminine was strong within her. Therefore it was incumbent upon her to add:

"It doesn't surprise me, Philip. When you told me how you picked that man up, I was confident that he was floating out there in your path just for that very purpose."

I had no inclination to dispute the point with her. That was the most painful part of it. I knew that she was right—that in putting Peter Johnson ashore, instead of in Irons, I had committed an error that might prove irreparable. But why couldn't she see that I realized it, and was smarting under my own condemnation, and so have spared me this added torture of hers? Why? Because she was her mother's daughter. That is the only answer.

As for my interview with "Pythias" Addison, we discussed it in all its phases, without reaching anything like a definite conclusion. Taking everything into consideration the evidence certainly seemed convincing that Cameron, in spite of his denials, had been in China in 1903. And yet we could not reconcile this with that almost fanatical love of truth which we knew to be his.

"Couldn't Dr. Addison have been mistaken?" Evelyn asked.

"It is possible, of course," I answered. "Yet Cameron's face and figure are not of a common type. Besides, I don't believe in doubles. I have heard of so-called wonderful likenesses, but I have never seen any that would deceive a friend of twenty years' standing."

A little later she inquired whether the detective engaged to shadow Philip Murphy had furnished a report.

"Yes," I told her, "it came in my morning's mail. Murphy is still at

Cos Cob. He didn't leave his bungelow all day yesterday, and he had no callers."

"I'm crazy to know what you learn tonight from Yip Sing," she went on, eagerly. "Oh, how I do hope it will give us some hint! It seems terrible to think of Uncle Robert in the hands of those unconscionable Chinamen. And, Philip, don't you think you had better take some one with you? I suppose Mr. Yip is to be trusted, but at the same time, you must remember you are going into the enemy's camp, and you should be careful."

But I laughed at the notion of taking a body-guard.

"I'm to meet him at nine o'clock," I told her, "in a public restaurant. Besides, there'll be a crowd of those 'Seeing New York' people down there about that time, and Chinatown will be on its best behavior. So never fear, little girl. Do you want me to telephone you when I get uptown? You know I'm going to stop tonight at my rooms in the Loyalton."

"Of course I want you to telephone me," she returned, emphatically. "It shouldn't take you very long to hear what Mr. Yip has to tell, should it? I shall be expecting you to call me up between ten and half-past, or by eleven at the latest; so don't dare to go for supper first."

"As if I could think of supper," I said, looking at her in a way I had, "when I might be hearing your voice!"

Could I have foreseen what the night was to bring forth I certainly should have discouraged her waiting for my message. But the power of prevision is given to few of us, and of those few I am not one.

Assuredly I had no misgivings as, after dining at the University club that evening, I stepped into an electric hansom and gave the driver the address of the Doyers street restaurant. Whatever it may have been in the past, I believed the Chinatown of the present to be, outwardly at least, a reasonably law-abiding section of the borough of Manhattan. And was not I that night the guest of one of its most honored citizens? What, therefore, had I to fear?

On the contrary, as we turned from the Bowery into that little semicircular thoroughfare which is perhaps the most characteristic of Chinatown's three principal streets, I was pleasantly interested. This was quite a different place from that which I had visited the afternoon before. Then, a sort of brooding quiet reigned over what was so ordinary as to be scarcely distinctive; for that part of Mott street on which the Yip Sing establishment is located, I have since learned, is merely one of the gates of the real Chinatown, of which Doyers street is the heart and center—and which awakens only after nightfall.

Now the place was alive and alight. Narrow roadway and still narrower sidewalks were ringed with a combination of denizens and sightseers. Shop fronts and upper windows glowed with varying degrees of brightness. From the Chinese theater on the left came a bedlam of inharmonious sounds: the brazen crash of cymbals, the squeaking of raucous stringed instruments, the resounding clangor of a gong. Voices high-pitched and voices guttural, mingled with hoarse and strident laughter, echoed from wall to wall of the street's encroaching squalid buildings.

Before the least unpretentious of all these structures, my hansom stopped, and as I stepped to the curb I got a glimpse of its banner and lantern strung balcony, giving to the street a touch of color that helped to lift it into an atmosphere which, if not Oriental, was at least vividly un-American.

Finding now that I had anticipated my appointment by something like ten minutes I chose to watch further the kaleidoscopic scene without, rather than pass the time waiting at a table within; and to this end took up a position of vantage on the restaurant's low step.

Whether I am more or less keenly observant than the average man I do not know. Probably any one as fascinated by the general scene as was I, would have noted as closely its individual elements. I am not sure. But the truth is that in a very few moments I had acquired a mental photograph of the opposite side of the street, in so far as it came within my direct vision. In other words every detail of the background of the moving picture before me was indelibly printed upon my mind's retina. There was the playhouse, with its plain, rectangular doorway, unadorned, save by a quartette of rude signs; two above, slanting outward, and one on either side, all announcing "Chinese Theater," and one giving the current attraction in Chinese characters, with the added notice, "Seats reserved for Americans." To the left of this was

a quick, high restaurant, with white painted bars window, beneath which a pair of cellar doors spread invitingly, one of them resting against a conventional American milk can. On the theater's right was a laundry, dim and evil-looking, two pipe-smoking celestials decorating its low step. And beyond this was the wide opening to a basement, above which, in white Roman lettering on a black ground, I read the legend: "Hip Sing Tong."

Again and again my gaze persisted in returning to this sign and the dimly lighted cavern beneath it. The place held for me the inexplicable, unfathomable charm of the mysterious, beside which the heathenish racket of the theater across the way, the sinister aspect of the dismal laundry and its pair of pipe-smoking guardians, even the constantly changing procession of varied types in roadway and on sidewalks, exerted but meager allure.

From time to time dark, silent fig-

ures glided vaguely into view only to disappear within this maw of mystery. Once, while I watched, I had seen a figure issue forth to be lost again instantly in the distant gloom of the curving street. Now, reverting once more to this magnet, after a moment's truancy, my eyes were rewarded by sight of another slowly emerging form, silhouetted nebulously against the dusk.

At the head of the steps it paused, uncertainly, and then, instead of gliding swiftly away in the direction of Pell street as did the other, it turned in my direction, passing almost at once into the comparatively glowing radius of the street lamp opposite.

I saw then that it was a man, thin to emaciation, round-shouldered, and crooked limbed. Whether some one jostled him, or a voice from the roadway startled him, I don't know. But for some reason he turned his head suddenly, and the light from the lamp fell full upon a face, stubble-bearded, deep-lined, and repellent, the face not of a Chinaman but of a white man; a face into which I had looked but twice, and then but for a brief moment; yet a face as indelibly fixed in my memory as were the grim fronts of the buildings now behind it—the face of Peter Johnson, the pretended castaway.

I think I must have had it in mind to pick him up bodily and carry him away with me that I might by inquisitorial torture wring from him a confession. Otherwise I should have adopted a less eager and more subtle method of bringing the miscreant to book than that which I rashly attempted. Before I considered the situation I was across the street and at his heels. My finger tips, indeed, were at his shoulder. In the fraction of a second I should have had him gripped and have been hustling him through the crowd as my prisoner. But at the instant of seeming success, he eluded me. In some strange way he caught alarm and, shrinking beneath my hand, darted sinuously off, between this pedestrian and that, with the flashing speed of a lizard.

But, though he escaped my clutch, my eyes were more nimble. With them I followed him until I saw him drop between the cellar doors which gaped beneath the white bulk window of the quick lunch room. And where my eyes went, I went after. Another brief moment and, without thought or heed, I was plunging in pursuit down that short, steep flight of steps—plunging from a lighted, peopled, noisy public street into the collied gloom and grim silence of a low underground basement.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

The Banker in Prison.

President Taft has pardoned J. B. F. Rhinehart. He wrecked the Farmers' and Drovers' Bank at Waynesburg, Pa., four years ago. He leaves the penitentiary January 15th, and there will be deep regret there when he departs. Today the banker is the business administrator of the prison. He has reorganized it. He has installed a system of labor distribution that robs the "idle house" of many of its horrors. Warden Francis declares the penitentiary is losing the greatest business wizard it has ever had; that his business genius has saved the reason of more than one prisoner and that fewer men go insane at Riverside now than before Rhinehart's advent.

Reinhart, immediately on reaching the penitentiary, began to make suggestions that won the attention of the warden. Acting thereon, the prison authorities quickly saw their efficiency. He counseled as to the management of all the departments and his advice was always followed by success. The prison today, based on his plans of administration, is one of the best in the country.

At first, to keep Reinhart employed, the warden put him in the mat factory. The results that he got there were followed by the banker being consulted as to a complete revision of the labor and accounting system and rapidly advancing the business end of the institution. While rejoicing in the good fortune of his prisoner, in view of the early date of his relief, the warden admits that he will miss the banker immeasurably.—Augusta Chronicle.

Chronic Constipation Cured.

"Five years ago I had the worst case of chronic constipation I ever knew of and Chamberlain's Tablets cured me," writes S. F. Fish, Brooklyn, Mich. For sale by all dealers.—Advt.

The work on the turn table and cinder pit in the Atlantic Coast Line freight yard is proceeding slowly, but surely. The tracks are now being laid up to the cinder pit and it is probable that the work on the coal chute will begin in the course of the next few days.

His Stomach Troubles Over.

Mr. Dyspeptic, would you not like to feel that your stomach troubles were over, that you could eat any kind of food you desired without injury? That may seem so unlikely to you that you do not even hope for an ending of your trouble, but permit us to assure you that it is not altogether impossible. If others can be cured permanently, and thousands have been, why not you? John R. Barker, of Battle Creek, Mich., is one of them. He says, "I was troubled with heartburn, indigestion, and liver complaint until I used Chamberlain's Tablets, then my trouble was over." Sold by all dealers.—Advt.

CITY MANAGER HERE.

Mr. M. M. Worthington Arrived in the City Tuesday Morning from Charleston.

City Manager M. M. Worthington arrived in the city on the 9.40 train from Charleston Tuesday morning to begin upon his duties here as manager of this municipality. Up to noon Mr. Worthington spent his time in looking the city over, although he had not paid a visit to the mayor. He visited the city clerk's office though and met the force employed there. Mayor Jennings stated that as soon as Mr. Worthington reported to him as ready to begin upon his new duties that he would call a meeting of council and outline to him what council wanted him to do in the position of City Manager. He stated that he could not say definitely when he would call this meeting of council, as it depended on when Mr. Worthington reported for duty. It would be as soon afterward, however, as would be convenient to the members of council.

NEW HEALTH OFFICER ELECTED.

Dr. H. A. Mood Chosen for Position—Assistant Appointed.

At a recent meeting of the Board of Health Dr. H. A. Mood was elected health officer for the City of Sumter with provision for his appointment of an assistant, who should have to do the routine work of the office under his daily supervision. Dr. Mood has appointed Mr. E. I. Reardon as his assistant.

The new administration has made a thorough inspection of all restaurants and will see that all possible provisions are taken in future for their cleanliness and sanitation. A new system has been inaugurated for the rigid daily inspection of all meat markets, fish shops, butcher pens and other places where the public food is kept or comes from and the new health officer will see to it that all municipal regulations are strictly enforced.

The purpose of the new regime is to have the city thoroughly cleaned up by spring, so that everything will be in a sanitary condition at that time.

The election of a man with a technical knowledge of the use and value of disinfectants and the proper method of applying them is a system in other cities throughout the country and Sumter is following out this plan, which has proved successful elsewhere, in making the changes in the health department.

TO GOVERN PAXVILLE.

Intendant and Wardens Are Elected for Town.

Paxville, Jan. 7.—At a recent election the following will compose the town council for this year: Intendant, J. M. Hicks; wardens, J. L. Pritchard, J. W. Mims, J. A. Brown and R. S. Smith.

Misses Alice Broadway and Loraine Lathan left Sunday to resume school duties at Smocks.

Miss Ermine Brunson of Orangeburg and a former teacher in the graded school was here for a few days of last week, en route to resume school duties at Conway.

H. S. Boyd has moved with his family to Tatum, where he now expects to reside.

Mrs. J. E. Weeks of Newberry has been here for several days, looking after her farming interests.

Thomas Griffin of Panola has accepted a position in the store of J. W. Mims.

Presiding Elder Walter I. Herbert will fill the Methodist pulpit here next Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock. Monday morning following he will hold the first quarterly conference of this charge.

Miss Ethel Corbett has returned to her school at Brookland.

Helen Curtis left Sunday for Wofford college.

Mr. and Mrs. Walker of Sandersville, Ga., after a pleasant visit to relatives here, have returned home.

With the roads in their present condition, it would be a good thing for county and town for the split log drag to be brought into service once more.

Chamberlain's Cough Remedy.

This remedy has no superior for coughs and colds. It is pleasant to take. It contains no opium or other narcotic. It always cures. For sale by all dealers.—Advt.

What has become of the split log drag? Its use at this time would be the means of saving much future labor to both county and town.

Best Cough Medicine for Children.

"I am very glad to say a few words in praise of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy," writes Mrs. Lida Dewey, Milwaukee, Wis. "I have used it for years both for my children and myself and it never fails to relieve and cure a cough or cold. No family with children should be without it as it gives almost immediate relief in cases of croup." Chamberlain's Cough Remedy is pleasant and safe to take, which is of great importance when a medicine must be given to young children. For sale by all dealers.—Advt.